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Braxton Monster
THE CHARLESTON GAZETTE
- THE STATE NEWSPAPER
--
MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
16*The Charleston Gazette Monday, Sept. 15, 1952
Left Skid Tracks
Where He Landed
(Special to The Gazette)
SUTTON, Sept. 14 The phanton
(Flatwoods
Left tracks from
feet apart.
six to eight
Wore a suit of green armor.
Looked like a mechanical man.
Was 10 feet tall, four feet wide,
Had a blood-red face.
Sported a black. spade-like cowl
which extended a foot or more
above its head
It had claw-like "toy hands,
too. and orange-green eyes the
size of half-dollars, according to
Mrs. Kathleen May, a 32-year-old
saw the "thing"
beautician who
a hillside near
Friday night on
her home in nearby Flatwoods.
Mrs. May's two sons. Edvard, 13.
too. So
and Theodore 12 saw it,
Ronald
17,
Lemon.
Shaver, 10, Ticodore Neal. 13. and
Eugene
iid
Neal Nunley, 14 all of Flatwoods
Today somewhat recovered from
the horror of their discovery Fri

day night, Mrs May and the six
boys who said they saw the mon-
ster, re-told the strange story.
This Is the Way It Was
it happened
Here's how
The younger boys were playing
football at Flatwoods Friday night
while Mrs May and Lemon looked
but not quite
on. It was almost
a weird light flashed
hark Then
Through the skies of Braxton Coun-
like a flaming object of some
kind which appeared to the seven
land on a nearby
Tatnesses to
hside The out to investigate
It was dark when they reached
the hillside, and Lemon produced a
(Contınged From Page 2)
flashlight Coming to the top of a
ridge. he turned the beam down
the slope. He stood frozen fo: A
moment, then unloosed a frightened
fell backwards to the
and
cry
ground. Mrs May and the children
said they could easily see what had
frightened young Lemon. But they
all retreated hastily
According to the beautician, who
said "I got a good look at it." E
monster was striding up the slope
toward them,
orange-green
pupil-less ey glowing
Well It Up
Although Lemon had dropped
his flashlight, it didn't matter, for
the
carried
monster
its
OWD
Illuminating system.
"It lit up like & Christmas tree."
Mrs. Mar said, with some sort of
interior lighting system
The six other witnesses gave less-

elaborate descripitions but swore
to state police officers and to Sut-
ton published A Lee Stewart that
they, indeed, had seen the "thing"
Only Lemon could gather enough
courage to accompany a shotgun-
armed posse back to the scene
Friday night, and he, sald Stewart.
was virably frightened.
Mrs. May went back to the scene,
the "footprints."
today-and saw
She, as well as Stewart, described
them as skid-like depressions in the
hillside brush, about six or eight:
feet apart The "sickening, piercing'
odor, which the witnesses said ac-
companied the monster's appear-
ance Friday was still slightly in
evidence, Mrs May said She also
pointed out that she had acquired
grease or oil stains on her
some
white beautician's uniform while
in the area today Searchers could -
find no other evidence of a visit
by the phantom.
Stewart, co-publisher of the Brax-i
ton Democrat at Sutton has prom-
ised, however, to keep himself in-
formed of any new developments.
In the case-unless a strange, green.
claw-like hand mysteriously lifts
his notes from nis desk
THE MONSTER STOOD right on
Mrs. Kathleen
where
the spot
May and these six boys pose for
the photographer, according to
stories. Shown are Mrs.
their
May, her two sons. Edward and
Theodore, and Eugene Lemon
Ronald Shaver. Theodore Neal
and Neal Nunley, all of Flat-
woods. Braxton County. They're
standing pat on their story that
they saw a huge, green monster
on this spot Friday night follow-
Ing
skies

through West Virginia
(Photo for The Gazette by A. Lee
Stewart)
meteorite
the flight of a
3-The Charleston Gazette Tuesday, Sept. 23. 1952
'Monster' Held Illusion
Created by Meteor's Gas
The "Braxton County Monster" has been described by a local in-
urance man and amateur astronomer as an illusion created by the
remains of a gaseous meteor.
He is Earl Stephens of nearby Belle, whose theory is one of the
that are
best offered here on the origin of the thing
daylights out of a B. axton County family
Sicory
was advanced
after on of Flatwoods returned from New
Kathleen May and Gene Lim. York where they deserves their
GAZETTE
photo
THE MONSTER which prowled the hills of Braxton County on Friday, Sept. 12, was drawn by a New York artist from descriptions given him by Mrs Kathleen May and Gene Lemon. Flatwoods residents who said they saw the "thing." The two witnesses, with A. Lee Stewart, Jr., Sutton publisher, told their experiences on We The People" television show in New York Friday night. The artist's conception was featured on the program with a background of weird music. Lemon and Mrs May hold the portrait which they say is "quite acucrate." The photo was taken in Charleston at the Grey-hound bus terminal.
experience before a nation-wide
television audience
It is Stephens op on that the
meteor, commonly called a fire bal
originated from an electrical dis-
in the ou er atmosphere.
charge
forming the shape of a gaseous hall
Odor of Sulphur
odor of sulphur was the
Stephens
declared
The
tip-off
buers with a 2iten flame i accountine
for the green apparitten the people
save
St. uhens and ore of the party
aparenile flashed the light on the
cas nail ust the instant before
Coisintegrated into thin air
The re
flection

of the light on the e
ave it the shape the people de.
scribed he said.
The "monster story cane to 1
a week ago after reports that Mrs
May Lemen and four youths ran
smack into the thing while search-
they sa
ing for a atrange objec
floating into the woods near their
home
They described 'he
monster
about eight feet tall, with red ever
and
green
body
topped
36
A
therouch
strance pointed mantle
However using a
search of the ares her
clair the next N
phurous odor remained
off-
enly the B-
Facts Support Theory
is backed
Stephens said his then
fact the earth entered
up by The
a meteoric stream on Auz 24 He
believes the caseous hedy may have
been ripped Bie as Comet
which has been splitting during
recent years
showeri
with its fragments
the same ette!
Dating
local residents obter an
nous hody that was belie
Luminous
have tallen within a 50-mile r
of Charleston.
His gaseous the
holstered by the store:
dents of rural St
clared they sa
fleat lauly to

Appear
search
Garrit
up any trace a th
Stephens tere
The Gaze in the
e termed
teste
fear of supernatu
the punds of the res
L-

[PAGE BREAK]

the
By HOLT BYRNE
Editor, The Braxton Central
Flatwoods Phantom Gave Braxton Folks
Something To Talk About Two Years Ago
son and Mr
medlately began
n
were
would dis
WILE
on the
Mrs. May said the air became echoed by those who accompanied! SANDERSON ARRIVES
foggy and misty and that a pecu- her on the trip up the hill.
Two years have passed since llar metallic odor which burned Never In the history of Braxton
Upon arrival here. Mr. Sander-height of not more than a few hun- At the Ume of the alleged mon-woods
about 7-15 p. m.
1952, when a group of boys and a was prevalent.
Schoenenberger Im-dred feet to the West of Charles- ster's appearance, thres possible evening of
Sept. 12. Secondly, the,
Flatwoods (ty. Va) mother wit-'
nessed a
systematic ton. This was also witnessed by explanations were put forth by lo- detalls of what they saw
and even
mysterious "monster" the hill, Mrs. May sald she saw a of Flatwoods." Newspaper stories
centered on an Incident as there of the area were obtained, a pre and they affirmed that when the son
as follows:
that fateful evening of Sept. 12, their nostrils and hurt their eyes County has so much interest been
study of the events. Aerial maps Mr. and Mrs. Clarence McClane cal people, noted by Mr. Sander of
who saw the phenomenon were
described as being "about 10 feet huge ball of fire some 100 yards were carried throughout the coun-
grossly misreported, while the nor
the alleged monster was seen was es fell to the ground."
As the group reached the crest of was on the story of the "Phantom liminary study of the area where
object disintegrated "a lot of ash- (1) A school teacher said that mal amount of worthless con-
tall, with a face of fiery red, ajaway. pulsing light and making a try, radio broadcasts were carried made
and five of the young nien; FIVE OBJECTS
looked like the ace of spades."

green body and a headpiece which slight hissing sound. She and the on large networks, and hundreds who had witnessed the "Phantorn
jit might be a "combination of the lecture was added. There are, hel
light from a nearby plane beaconjadded, a number of both import-
Two years have passed since the that the ball must have been at all parts of the country.
All of these events, Mr. Sander-land the fiery trail of the blazing ant and worthwhile points that
story of "The Phantom of Flat- least 10 feet or more in diameter. SCIENTIST CALLS
were interviewed Realizing that son determined, occurred within meteor reflected in some manner
stand out in Uiese reports. These
woods" was flashed all over the They continued to follow a path!
ranted, by persons of qualified to surmise that "at least five ob- monster."
young nien with her all estimated of phone calls were received from a full-scale Investigation was war-a
matter of minutes. leading him to take the shape of a glowing may be summarized as follows:
(1) There were unexplained ob-
status. Mr. Sanderson contacted Jects came over traveling ba (2) The second "endorsed by a jects in
the sky over Maryland and
press services rated as the No. 11'of the glowing object.
news story of the year.
civilized world by way of the press around the hill which would have in Newfoundland, asking for a
de-bers of the Charleston chapter of jto east of south. at just about live over
Flatwoods the
One call came from a scientist Earl Walter and Bert Ash, mem-straight line from west of north noted
scientist" is that in passing West Virginia, and possibly Penn-
meteorite, sylvanla, that night about Sun-
and radio to become what the brought them within about 50 feet scription of the creature: another the
National Speleogollcal Society.fmiles apart." This deduction was threw off a parucle that fell to down.
As they walked along, Mrs. May: Wisconsin asking if it possibly the Investigation.
came from a cheese company in who came to Sutton to assist with made by carefully reviewing aerial
the ground. This
In that Ume, especially in recent said that suddenly, to their left could have been an indated rub
thaps of the area.
(2) Something that gave light;
Jess forgotten by many
The following morning a thor-
lintegrate and turn to vapour and landed at Flatwoods and another
story which captivated the interest resembling powerful
months, the story has been more or and about 75 feet from the glowing ber cow which had been
launched ough Invesugation of the field subject. Mr. Sanderson pointed out monster.
In his preliminary report on the this might rise in the form of a'at Sugar Creek, near Gassaway.
object, there appeared two lights about ten days previously as an where the appearance of the
mon-that these five objects. starting
that evening.
Dashlights advertising stunt, Other calls came ster was noted was made by Mr. from the cast end
13) The third was derived from (3) Seven or eight people inspect-
the United States and brought vist-apart. One of the boys turned his Washington newspapers.
of the line, a man who had a nasty experience ed the former and at least five of
tors from all parts of the country Dashlight on the lights and there
ground was gone over in great de-lowing course:
Hundreds of persons came per-tail, covering several acres in as
and Imagination of people all over which seemed to be about a foot from Pittsburgh, New York and
Sanderson and his assistants. The (Flatwoods) assumed the fol-some years before, seeing an ap-
them were juveniles (This is very

parition one night and noting the Important).
to talk with those who witnessed stood a huge man-like creature sonally to have a look and to talk thorough a
where it was seen.
No. 1-passed east of Flatwoods death of a man the next. A minis (4) Woodrow Eagle of Duck saw
the object and to inspect the ground which Mrs. May said looked to be with those who had witnessed
the The boys who witnessed the phe Airport:
Millions of words were written feet in width.
about 10 feet in height and four phenomena. One of the Pittsburgh nomena were again Interviewed
manner as possible. and was seen south of the Sutton ter of religion was killed in an auto something
crash in flamas on a
No. 2-Crashed in or landed in later.
and
accident in the vicinity a few days wooded hillside at Sugar Creek..
by newspapers and magazines of BRIGHT RED FACE
bizarre "monster"
dailles sent a special writer to and cross questioned, Individual-Flatwoods (Green 'Man'):
cover the event; a minister tromly. In pairs, and as a group. Fol-
sufficiently convinced
Mrs. Kathleen May and her two!
"The fatousness of the first two that it was a construction, to call
seen by Describing the spectacle, she sald Brooklyn, N. Y., came to talk with lowing this, a number of residents
sons, Eddie and Freddie, Ronny it had "a bright red face, bright Mrs. May and the youngsters to of the community
No. 4-Crashed or landed
No. 3-Crashed at Sugar Creek. need hardly be pointed out," Mr. the sheriff, who investigated.
Shaver, Tommy Hyer. Gene Lem-green clothing, a head which re-see if their description was the viewed.
inter-Frametown;
at Sanderson explains. "As concluded "Beyand this," the report stated,
ons and Niel Nunley atop a hill in sembled the ace of spades and its same as one he had visioned in a In the
from the information available. 11"nobody should be prepared to go
back of the Bailey Fisher pro- clothing from the waist down hung dream some years ago; Fate Mag-gators
moved on
No. 5-Headed for Charleston took the boys about 20 minutes to on the evidence presented by these to Gassawny the city.
afternoon the investi- and disintegrated in the air over reach the hilltop site from the foot-reports. Everything further that
azine, which deals with true stories where Anderson Hughes was in-
ball ground in the valley and the was reported was or might have
"All these incidents," he said, object was still there. No meteor been pure conjecture. Neverthe
As they saw the object. Mrs. May sent Gray Barker, a native of the spot where Woodrow Eagle I
of the strange and the unknown, terviewed. Mr. Hughes pointed out "occurred simultaneously as far as fragment would glow that long. less, these four points should be
not been explained. In all prob- through the air "The viewers im-
"The Phantom of Flatwoods" has ward us as if it were floating, he could about the story.
can ascertain. If the things How a combination of a distant sufficiently strong when taken in
ability it never will.
medlately took flight and ran to Of all those who came to per-plane. had crashed

written and spoken, the story of said it appeared to be "moving to Braxton County, to find out what had
said another flaming object. didn't take off again or dissolve beacon light (and there are three
combination, to prompt any sea-
Two things are certain, however: the May home where a call was sonally investigate, probably only
obtained with which to cross the crushed spot."
A boat was residue, or at least a'
which he thought was a burning into gas, there ought be some in sight all the time on that hill-soned
investigator to pay the loca
of considerable proportion ■lashed ton County. Robert Carr.
There is no doubt that a meteor made to the then sheriff of Brax-one was qualified to conduct such river
and for four hours the group
ged or top) and the tail of a meteor' that ton a visit. This we did, and what
Later, following a
had passed over 20 minutes before we then encountered tells an al-i
across the heavens that Friday!
an investigation as the story of searched the forested slopes with-prehensive study of the terial tity is
beyond comprehension."
com-could create a floating green en- most entirely different and ex-
tremely peculiar story.
the "Flatwoods Phantom" present-out success. Later. Mr. Eagle was acquired during his inve ation,
BUIS IT UP
ble in at least three states-Mary- call at the time, however. and
Sheriff Carr and his deputy. Bured. He was Ivan Sanderson of contacted and retold his story of Mr.
Sanderson issued a report
"If this is not the explanation.
ginia.
over as a scientist and investigator what he believed was
In recapitulating his studies. Mr. then somebody has to explain two.
night of Sept. 12, 1952, being visi nell Long. were answering another New York City. known the world
the previous evening regarding which consisted of 26 typewritten Sanderson said two things regard
things, namely:
BAW SOMETHING'
way investigating a report that a With his assistant. Eddle Schoenen-hillside.
land, Pennsylvania and West Vir- were down Elk River below Gassa-of strange and unusual
phenomena. plane which had crashed into the was carried by newspapers
a burning pages on the subject. The reporting the story are fairly clear First.
all that something very unusual and Flatwoods, and
"(a) What did the people see at
"small cub airplane" had crashed berger, he arrived In Sutton a few
that Mrs. May and the young men of the river.
over the United States and ap-normally inexplicable appears to
"(b) what happened to it?"
with her, witnessed some sort of
Likewise, there is no doubt but into a hillside on the south side days following the appearance of
contacted and it was learned that newspaper.
At Frametown J. C. Dean was peared in at least one British have been seen by seven (and per
the monster to make a complete still another aerial object had
Regardless of what "the thing"
"object" of unusual proportions. (made by. Woodrow Eagle of Duck.
This call to the sheriff had been and thorough study of the event. crashed or landed on
hideously made up and lighted.
■ nearby

haps eight) sane people at Flat-may have been, or how it occurred
Mr. Sanderson, it might be sta-farm. Mr. Dean said this example
after two years It is still an event
proximately 7:15 p. m. on the even-crash
who said that he saw an object tod, has traveled the world over had landed on an overgrown and
that is vividly imprinted in the
into a mountainside.
The story had its beginning at ap- which resembled a small airplane making studies of the strange, the
isolated field at the top of a hill
minds of those who witnessed the
A unusual and the different from or-known as James' Knob but that
visitation of the "Phantom of Flat-i
woods.'
Four youngsters were playing foot-! accident. Upon their
ing of Sept. 12 when the meteor search by the officers failed to dinary happenings. He is a writer
authough seen by the two young
ball on the grade school playground. Sutton.
was seen passing over Flatwoods. disclose any evidence of such an and lecturer of considerable note
James boys. had not been investi
return to, and is a quite frequent guest on gated because it had been
at the time, watched the object went to Flatwoods to Investigate, shows.
sheriff immediately nation-wide television and radio garded as a "fireball."
pass through the skies and noted: Mrs. May's report. In the mean-
that it appeared to have dropped on time, however, a large number,
The following day Mr. Sander-i
the hilltop of the Fisher farm. of Flatwoods people had gone to
son met with the Charleston chap-
They considered the possibility the hilltop to investigate and any
ter of the National Speleological
that it was a "Flying Saucer" and evidence of the visit of the crea-
Society and was informed by Mrs.
Iinmediately set out to investigate.. ture had been destroyed.
Alice Williams that she had wit-
At the home of Mrs. May they The day following the incident.
nessed the disintegration of still
xtopped and asked Mrs. May and, Mrs. May said:
another fiery object in the air at a
perty in Flatwoods.
With all the wards that have been!
in great folds."
the
her two sons to accompany them! "It was a hideous sight and I
up the hill to look for the "Saucer." would give anything I own if I had
As the group neared the hill..not seen It." Her thoughts were
re
mr
The Charleston Daily MAIL
D PREES UNITED PRESS
KAP EPORTS WOLE
Today's News Today"
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA, SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 12, 1954

[PAGE BREAK]

Sanderson-Flatwoods Interview Timeline
(Note- Hugh McPherson narrates the very beginning and end of the tape.
McPherson, Nebel, and Sanderson were all friends and/or associates)
[AD] Hugh McPherson (All-Night Radio Show on WCHS Charleston, WV) 1951-1970?
[AD] Long John Nebel (Radio Show on WOR, WNBC, & WMCA in NY) 1952-1975?
Flatwoods (Braxton County, WV) UFO Incident-1952
Ivan Sanderson's on-scene Flatwoods Investigation-1952
Long John Nebel's Interview of Ivan Sanderson at WOR in NY-1953
(Nebel conducted this interview at McPherson's request)
Hugh McPherson's rebroadcast of Sanderson's 1953 interview on the 16th anniversary of the 1952 Flatwoods encounter- 1968
Ivan T. Sanderson (circa 1965)
Hugh McPherson (with Harry Belafonte) at
WCHS in 1950s
Long John
Nebel at WOR
in 1963
Gary - the recordings
CaN
recording's time Live
be confusing. I put this together to help
clarify "who" "where" and "when".
Mike

[PAGE BREAK]

UFO NEWSLIPPING
JAN 1996
#318
Pioneer Press, St Paul, MN 2 NOV 1995
By Carole Baker
On two consecutive nights recently, a Gulf Breeze resident was witness to amber colored triangular light patterns in the skies over Gulf Breeze.
Driving home from work on the night of Thursday, November 30 at about midnight, he was driving east on 98 near Tiger Point. To his right, or south of Hwy. 98, he saw an amber configuration of lights with an amber configuration of lights with an undefined, cloudy amber light within the triangle. "The lights themselves were very clear, although not real bright. They were definitely not flares, there was no smoke coming from them and they were steady in

the sky, not falling or drifting at all," the witness told me. "I just looked at it and then it was gone." Continuing on his drive home, he kept looking at the sky hoping to see the lights appear once more, but they did not. The sighting lasted about 10 seconds and the triangle appeared at about 10 degrees above the horizon, not far above the tree line. The witness described the size of the triangle at arm's length as being "about the size of a quarter."

The next night, the witness was again returning home from work. At approximately 11:30 p.m. on Friday, December 1, he was driving east on 98 close to the junction of College Blvd. when he saw a similar triangular configuration in the sky. "This time it was on the other, north side of 98" the witness states, "it looked exactly the same as the one I saw the night before." This evening, the configuration appeared higher in the sky, at about 30 degrees elevation. "It just blinked on It was the same triangle of lights, with that same indistinct cloudy glow inside. It just stayed there in the sky for about five seconds and then just blinked off. It did not move in the sky or fade out." The witness stated that on both evenings, he had not noticed any aircraft in the sky before or after the sightings. "The second night, I was really looking as I drove along, noticing the stars and looking for planes or anything. I was really surprised when I saw the triangle again

The witness estimated that on both occasions he was about five miles the triangles, but this is hard to estimate

This is not the first time this witness has seen something unidentified in the sky. He was

witness, along with hundreds of other people to an unusual "red light" sighting that took place during the firework display in Pensacola on July 4, 1992.
To report a sighting, please call the Pensacola/Gulf
[AD] MUFON Hotline at 438-3261.
Breeze
For information of the upcoming 1996 Gulf Breeze Conference, please call Project Awareness at [AD] 432-8888. The Conference will be held March 15-17 at the Clarion Resort on Pensacola Beach. Speakers will include Whitley Strieber, Dr. John Mack, Dr. Edith Piore, Dr. Michael Grosso and more. Keep Looking Up!
Legitimate scientists gathered here this week to discuss UFOs. Among their beliefs: UFOs are a legitimate issue for investigation and for public funding.
Above: Many people wh hay clalm the photo graphic ovt- dence taken by people around the world - from Italy to Mexico to Arizona-over the past 45 years that many people belleve argues for the exis tence of UFOs.
"The UFO problem is an absolutely ideal model for demonstrating how vulnerable science is to politics because it points out what happens to scientific inquiry when that inquiry moves out to the edges of the mainstream."
CHUCK PENSON
SCIENCE MUSEUM OF MINNESOTA
Far Out
R
BY ANNE

BRATAAS
STAFF WRITER
from
the country met at the
Hotal for the second
annual conference on the
Science and Politics of UFO
Research, sponsored by the Science Museum of
Minnesota. Among their beliefs:
UFOs are real but the nature of the phe-
nomenon is unknown. Are they from outer space?
Are they advanced craft made and tested secret-
ly by the United States or other governments?
Are they from other dimensions? Are they a
combination of these?
UFOs are a legitimate topic for mainstream
scientists to investigate and the public to fund,
just as researchers work to understand AIDS,
moon landings and climate change. Only this kind
of effort will produce the evidence to ultimately
prove or disprove - their existence and
understand their significance.
Scientific discussions of UFOs have been sub-
ted by a systematic effort of the U.S. govern-
ink UFOs since 1947. Why would a
ther to foil rational debate on the
policy makers fear the public will
government that cannot explain or
nomenon.
dly cannot now; no one can.
many at the confer-
e people
ence were scientists and academics working in
the mainstream even attempt explanations is
a decidedly radical act; they risk isolation and
ridicule.
Says Chuck Penson, director of the Computer
Education Center at the Science Museum of
Minnesota and one of the conference's coordina-
tors:
"The goal of this conference was to give
people insight into how the
process of scientific discov-
ery works in the real world.
A lot of people have the
notion that science and scien-
tists are open-minded and want
to get at the truth at any cost
and will stop at nothing to find
out the real nature of something.
And that's just not the case,
which comes as a shock to many

people.
The UFO problem is an absolutely ideal model for demonstrating how vulnerable science is to politics because it points out what happens to scientific inquiry when that inquiry moves out to the edges of the mainstream. Because it cannot control UFOs, early on, the government decided to put UFOs in the most ludicrous light possible in a careful program to debunk them and to encourage a lunatic fringe around them and it has been very, very successful at it."
Consider some of the presentations offered by speakers at the two-day conference as they attempt to explain why the public does not
(continued on page 10)

[PAGE BREAK]

PIONEER PRESS, ST Faul, MN 2 NOV 199..
(continued from page 9 - PIONEER PRESS, St. Paul, MN Nov. 2, 1995)
receive rational information about UFOs. Instead, the public learns about UFOs by hysterical tabloid treatment and fantastic movie screenplays:
Researcher Ann Druffel describes the work of the late Dr. James E. McDonald, an Arizona government atmospheric physicist who began to investigate UFOs on the side in the 1950s and 1960s.
Reviewing Air Force records and reports from US. Navy sonar logs of underwater UFOs - and interviewing crew members who experienced odd things, McDonald found "hundreds of reports that had been written off as absurd," Druffel says. "Solid reports of craftlike objects. Many cases were described as metallic objects doing hard-to-believe maneuvers. They were written off as stars, garages, etc." Most reports consisted of eye-witness accounts, photographs and radar information.
McDonald also compared the Air Force "Blue Book" files its own internal investigation of UFO sightings

with oral accounts of sightings.
He found that the Blue Book
files were incomplete. This
made him suspicious of a good-
faith effort on the part of the
Air Force.
When the Air Force named a
Colorado researcher, Edward
Condon, to take over the Blue
Book project, McDonald sent
Condon a list of 100 best cases to
investigate only to learn later
that Condon had little interest in
asking scientific questions about
them. Instead, Condon ridiculed them
and eventually authored a report con-
cluding but not proving - that
UFOs were not worthy of further
study. This became the basis of official
US government policy.
"McDonald
was dismayed,"
researcher Druffel says. "After the
Condon report, McDonald became its
most vocal critic."
ner the laws of physics as now known do not
predict or explain.
Says Maccabee: "The point is, when they put
the pedal to the metal, they go right through
the metal. Good luck we're going to need it."
Historian Dr. David M. Jacobs from Temple
University studies people who believe they have
been abducted by operators of UFOs, then
returned to Earth. This is a highly controversial
area within the study of UFOs. Not everyone
who believes UFOs exist and are deserving of
systematic scientific inquiry believes that
abductions are real.
Jacobs has studied hund-
reds of "abductee
Pennsylvania.
McDonald did succeed in getting the
topic of UFOs scheduled for debate before the
US. House of Representatives in July 1968. "He
reasoned that the bearing could finally bring
UFOs up as a scientific topic," Druffel says.
But with the impending November elections,
too many politicians became fearful of the
effect discussing UFOs would have on their
chances for re-election, and the hearings ended.
"This was the first and last time UFOs were
discussed in the U.S. Congress," Druffel says.

McDonald died in June 1971. It was just several months after he appeared before Congress to discuss a new problem of atmospheric pollution: the emerging ozone hole. Says Druffel: "He was openly ridiculed at the hearings. Not for ozone, but for his UFO work."

Dr. Bruce Maccabee, an optical physicist with the Naval Surface Weapons Lab, has examined hundreds of photographs and videos of reported UFOs. In his analyses, he determines if the images have been doctored - are deliberate boaxes or if there are optical anomalies, solar or atmospheric properties that can explain them.

Once they pass the test as reliable images, be uses elements of the photos such as landmarks, position and angle of the sun and shadows or cloud movement to mathematically produce characteristics of the craft, such as size, shape, speed and direction of travel.

Patterns keep appearing. One such image is an egg-shaped object about 26 feet wide and 13 feet high with a skirt of spheres fuel tanks? ringing it, traveling at speeds and in a man-

WNW

Light Stratus

from personal experience." But, be adds, even if the Roper polls are wrong by 75 percent that's still about 1 million Americans who believe they have been abducted by UFOs.

"We're at an odd phase in abduction research," he says. "The sky is no longer the landscape on which the battle with UFOs is being fought; now, it's the landscape of the mind."

Just what kind of minds are these, anyway? Says Jacobs: "There is a wacko element that's always with us it comes with the territory."

But sensationalism can't detract from the fact that serious scientific questions about UFOs remain to be answered scientifically, he says.

Delaware Water Gap

(Distance: 9 miles)

UFO sightings are documented in a lot of ways- and quick sketches are common. This one was made by zoologist Ivan T. Sanderson Oct. 2, 1958 In a sighting near Blairstown, N.J. (Courtesy of Center for UFO Studies).

eports." He also has participated in Roper public opinion polls in which a random sample of

6,000 people were asked if they have ever been abducted by aliens. According to those results, about 5 million Americans believe they have been. Jacobs thinks that something very unusual happened to a lot of these people; he just can't say what exactly.

A common theme of abduction reports are that sane and sober people suddenly notice they have substantial amounts of time - two hours, say missing that they can't explain. After it, they are troubled, but they don't know why. Under hypnosis they recount tales of being examined on operating tables by aliens in what appears to be some sort of reproductive or genetic research program. The communication is done psychically with aliens, who erase nearly all memory from the abducted people before releasing them.

Descriptions of the aliens vary. Some are small and gray with elephantlike skin. Others have a pointed, oval face with large, dark almond-shaped eyes and a small nose. No one really knows their motives or goals or whether they are friends or foes.

Says Jacobs: "Critics say that these abductees just want to be on "Oprah" and that they get their ideas from UFO researchers, not

The Science Museum's Penson remembers his own period of skepticism about the UFO problem. It ended 20 years ago on a November night in Great Falls, Mont., when he listened to a police scanner all night long while a sheriff, deputies and Air Force officials talked about sighting a strange glowing object over a nuclear missile silo.

Reports of the object crackled all night long on ham radios and police scanners, and Penson followed them all. The next day, the newspaper contained a few short paragraphs on it. It called the glowing object "an unidentified belicopter.

This worried him more than a UFO "I don't know about you, but when I hear officials are content with the explanation that unexplained helicopters are flying over a highly secured military nuclear facility, I get pretty concerned. That was an eye-opening experience for me."

He likens the UFO problem to other great controversies in the history of science. Galileo, for example, in 17th century Italy. Galileo practiced radical science by challenging church authorities for freedom of scientific inquiry and by supporting the Copernican system of astronomy.

Under this system, the Earth is no longer the stationary center of the universe just another planet among many revolving around a minor sun. This was a troubling view to church officials at the time who believed it diminished humankind's role and God's plan. A church commission convened to study the Earth's motion found the Copernican system and Galileo's support of it heretical, ordered him to stop teaching it and ultimately impris oned him for writing about it.

For a UFO bibliography or videotape copy of the conference

Says Penson: "Imagine if Galileo's research had been funded by a grant from the Pope with the understanding that anything he learned would be the exclusive property of the church. This is where we are today with Big Science and government policy on the UFO problem. There is tremendous resistance to change in the scientific community."

speakers, call the Science Museum of Minnesota Education Division at 221-4742.

But there is also tremendous curiosity that can surmount resistance. Penson encourages people to learn about UFOs by reading about them in sources other than tabloids.

Says Penson: "I don't understand what the big problem is, why this subject is so untouchable in the mainstream. I personally, would like to

know the truth. But the politics of science funding make it very difficult for scientists to study this. As a country, we invested billions of dollars in the space program and can point to things like Velcro that we got from it that affect everyday life. It isn't like that with UFOs. We might not get Velcro. Then again, we might get better than Velcro."

UFO Buffs: They Are Not Alone

By Christopher Smith

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

MESQUITE, Nev. There is a heated iscussion in the hotel lobby about anti- ision. In the to an American Indian who claims his grandfather rescued an injured alien from a crashed spaceship.

They are here to buy videos like the "UFO-Bigfoot Connection" or "Count-